

Law Enforcement Division
Bi-Weekly Field Report
3/4/13 – 3/17/13

DISTRICT 1

CO Doug Hermanson received complaint information involving predator hunters trespassing onto private property. The hunters were identified and later interviewed. A confession was obtained and enforcement action was taken.

CO Marvin Gerlach investigated a complaint of illegal cutting of trees on state land in early March. He located an elevated blind currently under construction on the state land. The subject building the blind had brought in heavy equipment off his private property to create a path to the deer blind and had opened several long shooting lanes extending into a marsh, all on state land. For good measure, the subject also decided to get a head start on his deer baiting as several illegal deer baits were located near other deer blinds in the area. Enforcement action was taken.

COs Jason Wicklund and Dave Painter watched a vehicle leave a large gathering on a local lake. The vehicle then did a few doughnuts on the road for the watching crowd. A traffic stop on the vehicle a short distance out of sight of the crowd resulted in many violations. Violations included careless operation of a vehicle, possession of marijuana, open intoxicants, invalid plates and operating while impaired. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Grant Emery was the first officer on scene of a domestic disturbance near Bessemer. A subject was very irate, holding a five foot piece of pipe and was threatening to hit anyone who approached him. CO Emery contacted the subject and was able to have the subject put down the pipe without incident. The subject was taken into custody and arrested by local deputies.

DISTRICT 2

CO Brett Gustafson investigated a fatal snowmobile accident on Mackinac Island. Reportedly the subject, who wasn't wearing a helmet, lost control and hit a tree. The passenger was thrown from the sled, narrowly missing several trees himself, and walked away with only bumps and bruises.

COs Jeff Panich and Brett Gustafson conducted a snowmobile safety patrol on Mackinac Island. The COs encountered several violations and issued over 40 warnings. They also issued five tickets for no helmets, one for an unregistered snowmobile and arrested a subject on a drug related warrant.

CO Kyle Publiski received a call from a conservation officer with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources who explained that he observed some Canadian anglers who were ice fishing in Michigan waters. Upon contact, the wayward pair of anglers was in

violation of both Ontario and Michigan law. CO Publiski investigated the incident and proceedings have begun for possession of undersized walleye and fishing without a license.

COs Jeff Panich and Kyle Publiski were on routine patrol when they observed the familiar vehicle of a local coyote hunter. As they watched the subject, it became apparent that he had an uncased firearm in the truck. Upon contact the COs found the firearm was also loaded in both the barrel and magazine. Tickets were issued for uncased/loaded firearm in a motor vehicle.

COs Jared Ferguson and Mike Evink assisted the Michigan State Police (MSP) on the Garden Peninsula with the recovery of human bones found by an angler. The ice angler had gone to shore and had come across a femur bone. He reported the find to 911. Soon after, the COs were needed to transport the angler and the troopers to and from the scene.

COs Jerry Fitzgibbon and Robert Crisp assisted MSP troopers with an incident where subjects had broken into a residence then assaulted and tied up the occupant. The COs arrived with the troopers and secured the scene. The officers found the suspects had left prior to their arrival.

DISTRICT 3

While on patrol, CO Duane Budreau observed and followed a column of black smoke to a fire where there were illegal materials being burned. Three 17 year olds were in a bed of a pickup truck in reclining chairs watching the fire. Considering their age, CO Budreau gave them a warning and advised them to put the fire out, then watched as they started to kick snow on the fire. CO Budreau left and came back to check about 20 minutes later and found the fire going again, with the three subjects sitting in their reclining chairs once again. This time a ticket for unlawful disposal of solid waste was issued.

CO Michael Feagan found an ORV operating on the North Central Trail, which is currently a snowmobile trail. The operator was on a closed trail, his driver's license was restricted and he was not wearing a helmet. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Matthew Theunick and Sgt. Greg Drogowski investigated an angler harassment complaint which had occurred on Mullett Lake. An angler reported other anglers had operated their vehicles within 10 feet of his ice shanty several times at high speed. In addition, they were fishtailing and swerving on the ice with their vehicles dangerously close, and a bottle was thrown in one angler's direction. Some threats were given, with the "problem" being he was fishing "too close" to "their" fishing location. The investigation led to four suspects, and multiple interviews were conducted with witnesses and suspects. Charges pending include angler harassment, reckless driving, littering and witness intimidation.

Checking Bear Den Lake, CO Jon Sklba noticed an angler watching him with binoculars as he pulled up. The angler then immediately walked over to a tip-up and pulled it out. After walking out and contacting the angler, CO Sklba found he still had three other lines out. A ticket was issued for fishing with too many lines.

While patrolling Lake Charlevoix, CO Andrea Erratt checked ice shanties still left on the ice and anglers fishing for walleye. Upon contacting an angler at dusk, the subject stated he had a cut finger and asked for a band-aid. While supplying him with a band aid, CO Erratt counted lines and found he was fishing with too many lines. He was issued a band-aid and a ticket.

CO Bill Webster received a complaint of an ice shanty frozen into the ice and left out past the March 15th deadline to have them removed. CO Webster responded to the area and chipped the shanty out of the ice, along with empty propane tanks and beer bottles. He then contacted the owner of the shanty, who stated he planned on burning it the next day. CO Webster informed him that would also be illegal and issued him a ticket for leaving his shanty on the ice past March 15th.

DISTRICT 4

CO Rebecca Hopkins investigated a complaint of an ice shanty that had been set on fire in Leelanau County. The shanty owners stated they poured gas on the shanty and set it on fire because they did not feel like dragging it off the ice as required by the March 15th deadline. A ticket was issued for illegal disposal of solid waste.

While following up on a complaint of a potential overlimit of steelhead on Manistee Lake, CO Carla Soper contacted two possible suspect boats, each containing two subjects. CO Soper found that one of the vessels contained no lifejackets, was not registered and their boat trailer was displaying an invalid plate. Enforcement action was taken.

COs Steve Converse and Carla Soper were checking anglers along the Manistee River when they encountered three subjects who had been fishing for steelhead. When contacted, the three subjects provided false information to the COs as to their identities. The COs were eventually able to identify the subjects and discovered that one of the subjects had been fishing without a license and another was in possession of marijuana. Enforcement action was taken.

COs Steve Converse and Carla Soper followed up on a complaint of illegal trapping in the Manistee Marsh. The COs located seven illegally set muskrat traps and developed a suspect. A short interview led to an admission and a ticket for trapping muskrats during the closed season.

CO Angela Greenway responded to a Report-All-Poaching (RAP) complaint of a subject who allegedly used his vehicle to intentionally run over several wild turkeys in the roadway and then take several of the birds. A lengthy investigation revealed the

location of possible suspects. When CO Greenway contacted the suspects at their residence, she observed a garbage bag on the porch overflowing with wild turkey feathers, tails and parts. CO Greenway obtained a full confession from the subjects and arrest warrants will be sought through the prosecutor's office.

CO Mike Wells located a subject who had registered a river otter before he purchased a license. CO Wells conducted an investigation and discovered that the individual was trapping without a license and issued a ticket for failure to validate an otter kill tag.

DISTRICT 5

CO Chris Bowen participated in the Operation Life Saver Patrol which was conducted in Crawford and Otsego Counties. CO Bowen issued two tickets for operating on the railroad tracks and gave six warnings for various snowmobile violations.

CO Steve Lockwood was on fish patrol in Gladwin County when he observed three anglers catching largemouth bass and burying them in the snow a short distance away. After further surveillance, CO Lockwood approached the subjects who all denied catching any fish. The anglers seemed a little surprised when CO Lockwood let them know that he had been watching for a period of time before approaching. After retrieving three bass from their "hiding spot", enforcement action was taken.

Responding to a complaint of a dog being caught in a snare, CO Steve Lockwood located several illegal snares. Further investigation led to a subject who confessed to setting the snares. Enforcement action was taken and the snares were removed from the area.

CO Jason McCullough was checking ice anglers when he observed one of the subjects had over 35 bluegill lying on the ice. The subject claimed that he would sort the fish at the end of the day and throw the extras back in the water. The obvious problem was that all the "extra" fish would be dead from lying on the ice. CO McCullough ticketed the subject for taking an overlimit of bluegill.

CO Warren MacNeill responded to a snowmobile fire on a local lake. Upon arrival, CO MacNeill found what was left of the completely burned snowmobile lying on the ice. There were no injuries and it is believed a mouse nest may have been the cause of the fire.

DISTRICT 6

While investigating a complaint of a deer shot after dark in late January, CO Larn Strawn stopped a suspicious vehicle that left from the suspect's residence and was approaching the deer kill site. After stopping the vehicle and speaking to the driver, the CO detected an overwhelming smell of marijuana coming from the driver and the vehicle. The CO confirmed his suspicions and discovered a large amount of marijuana and drug paraphernalia in the vehicle. The subsequent investigation led the CO to a

local residence where he and a trooper with the MSP contacted two additional suspects with more marijuana, amphetamines and cash from the sale of the drugs. Felony warrants were issued and the subjects were arrested.

CO Quincy Gowenlock was patrolling the Maple River State Game Area (SGA) when he came across two hunters in the parking lot. The two had just left their car and were off to hunt rabbits. The CO observed what appeared to be lead shotgun shells in their hunting vests. The CO confirmed that they were hunting with lead and asked them to turn around and read the sign that they just walked by. The hunters read the sign, which advised that no toxic shot could be used in the game area. The hunters then asked the CO what toxic shot meant. The CO explained that the area contained a lot of waterfowl and when the toxic lead shot is digested by the birds they die from lead poisoning. They both apologized and left the area to buy some steel shot.

While working in plain clothes on the Saginaw River, CO Ken Lowell watched an angler land a walleye that was hooked in the side. The angler then unhooked the fish and threw it in his live well. The CO then contacted the subject and after going through the live well, the CO also found the anglers had short walleyes. Enforcement action was taken.

While patrolling Crystal Lake in Montcalm County, CO Ken Lowell contacted an angler who was catching some nice bluegills. The angler talked about how he had been catching nice gills all winter long on the lake. When the angler was asked to see his fishing license he could not find it. It was determined that he failed to purchase a license and was issued a ticket for the violation.

Last Christmas CO Ken Lowell worked on a case where a hunter shot a deer after dark and from a vehicle. The case recently ended with the hunter paying \$1,300 in fines and restitution and losing his hunting privileges for the next four years.

Sgt. Ron Kimmerly was watching walleye anglers on the Saginaw River just before the season closed. The ice had just recently melted and the river was full of anglers taking limits of walleye. The Sgt. had received numerous complaints of anglers taking limits in the morning and limits again in the afternoon. As the Sgt. checked boats coming off the river at the access site, he contacted two anglers who advised they had a great day. The two anglers had a live well full of walleye. After checking the walleye the Sgt. asked both subjects if they were in possession of any more walleye. Both stated no. The Sgt. then searched the vehicle and under a pile of clothes found a cooler. The cooler contained six one gallon baggies full of fresh walleye fillets totaling an additional 22 walleyes. Enforcement action was taken.

While on patrol using snowmobiles, COs Joshua Wright and Seth Rhodea came upon a group of coyote hunters. While checking them for licenses and firearms, CO Wright observed an uncased firearm in the passenger seat of one of the trucks. The firearm was not just uncased but also loaded with a 30 round magazine attached. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Chad Foerster was patrolling the Saginaw Bay when he came into contact with two anglers who were proud to show off their limit of 10 walleye. Unfortunately for them, they forgot their measuring device and had to guess if the fish met the legal limit of 15". The CO measured the fish and found that four of the 10 fell significantly short of the legal mark. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 7

CO Gary Raak located fresh ORV tire tracks in the Barry SGA. Contact was made with a husband and wife operating a "three wheeler" and dirt bike on state land as well as on the roadway. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Mike Mshar reported that a subject he arrested for trapping with untagged traps requested a jury trial on the incident. The judge found the subject guilty of the violations and was charged \$500 in fines and costs and is to serve three days in jail.

CO Mike Mshar responded to a complaint of a subject attempting to snag walleye at the Allegan Dam along the Kalamazoo River. CO Mshar conducted an undercover patrol, fishing alongside the subject and witnessed the violation. The subject was ticketed and it was discovered that he had 13 prior violations with the DNR; with many related to snagging and illegal taking of walleye. The subject's equipment was also confiscated..

CO Cary Foster observed an ice angler on Morrison Lake who appeared to have panfish on the ice near the holes he was fishing. CO Foster moved to another vantage point to monitor the angler's activity and eventually contacted him as he left the lake. The angler initially advised CO Foster that he had no fish and only a lantern in his bucket. When questioned on the second bucket he responded he might have a few fish. A check of his two buckets revealed 51 bluegills, 26 fish over his limit. As CO Foster took enforcement action, two citizens walking by wanted to know if there was any way they could assist the angler by posting bond as he is the most law abiding citizen they know.

During a recent weekend, CO Dave Rodgers was busy checking over 200 ice anglers who were fishing for crappie during the day and after dark. CO Rodgers ticketed five persons for fishing without licenses and also described an incident which occurred while checking anglers where he listened to a person telling his companions how he has never been checked by a conservation officer and has never purchased a fishing license. CO Rodgers introduced himself and ticketed the angler for fishing without a license. CO Rodgers listened as the 28 year old angler continued to tell his story and detail his rather avid fishing activity. It appeared at the scene this same angler had purchased a case of beer and two fifth bottles of alcohol on his way to the lake that day.

DISTRICT 8

CO Kyle Bader observed an angler walk on the ice with a full size fishing pole. The angler sent a few casts into the open water while walking toward the edge of the ice,

within three feet of the open water. Just as CO Bader was thinking "this guy is going to go through the ice", he did. As CO Bader got his rescue disk from the back of the truck, the angler was able to touch the bottom (the water was only three to four feet deep) and get himself back onto the ice. When the angler made dry land, CO Bader asked for a fishing license. He didn't have his fishing license or ID on his person. The angler supplied a false name to CO Bader, which his girlfriend verified. The alias did not have a fishing license or show up on file. When CO Bader obtained his real name, the angler had three outstanding warrants. He did have a fishing license though and proper action was taken.

COs Derek Miller and Jason Smith were patrolling lakes in Lenawee County where they encountered an angler coming off the ice of a lake where they had received multiple complaints of overlimits. A quick check of the anglers' catches uncovered 13 panfish over the limit. Enforcement action was taken.

After observing anglers at a local dam, CO Rich Nickols checked two subjects fishing at the entrance to a fish ladder. One of the subjects had tossed his fishing pole in the river but the water was too low and the pole could be observed sticking out of the water. The subject admitted to fishing and said he usually buys a license every year on his birthday but he didn't get one for the current season because he did not have a valid ID. The subject also had a warrant for failing to appear on a snagging charge. The pole was retrieved from the river and the subject was issued a ticket for fishing without a license and given a notice to appear for the warrant.

CO Damon Owens investigated a complaint of unattended lines on a Jackson County lake. CO Owens located the tip-ups which were completely frozen and could not be easily removed. After a long struggle of breaking the ice up around the tip-ups to get them out, the CO was able to locate the owner at home ten miles away who received a ticket for the violation.

CO Pete Purdy contacted an ice angler who didn't have his fishing license in his possession and was operating an unlicensed ORV without a helmet onto the lake. The angler was also using tip-ups with no name and address on them. When asked if he had ever licensed his ORV the angler advised he had owned the ORV since 1999 and it had never been licensed. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Shane Webster was approaching an angler on the ice and witnessed the man scooting fish back into his hole with his foot. Upon contact the angler was still found to be in possession of 32 panfish, seven over the legal limit. The man stated that he thought he could keep as many as he wanted as long as he "sorted them" and only took home 25 and threw the rest through the ice. CO Webster explained that the fish he had kept on the ice and in his bucket while fishing would not survive being thrown back in after that amount of time and that it is a possession limit, not a take home limit. A ticket was issued.

CO Jeff Goss investigated a suspected illegal deer case found at a taxidermist. The subject had purchased two archery deer tags during the 2012 deer season. It was discovered that the subject had filled his original archery tag early in the season, and was then left with only an antlerless tag. While hunting in early November, the biggest buck of his life "forced" him to make an unethical and expensive decision. Unfortunately the subject made the wrong decision and shot the buck without a valid license. After killing the buck the subject purchased another archery tag and then took the deer to a taxidermist. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Derek Miller checked anglers on a back lake in the Sharonville SGA. After observing both anglers fish for a while, CO Miller made contact. The subjects admitting to fishing on the lake in years past and doing quite well. When asked for licenses both subjects stated they did not have licenses. Neither had purchased a license in the past five years. The father and son duo were educated and enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 9

While checking anglers at Atwood Stadium in Flint, Sgt. Tom Wanless contacted two subjects. One of them did not have his fishing license with him; he stated that he lost his wallet and all identification. Sgt. Wanless checked to confirm the subject had a license, which he did; however, the subject had a warrant for drunk driving. Sgt. Wanless transported the subject to the Flint City jail where he was lodged.

CO Linda Scheidler received a complaint of an ice shanty that was left out overnight after March 1st. The CO left a tag on the shanty and followed the ice path to the nearest residence. She was met half way by the owner of the shanty who said he'd remove it when he could, within a few days. CO Scheidler advised him he would be receiving a warning for not having his name and address on the shanty, and a ticket if it was still there the following morning. The shanty was removed before the CO could walk back to her vehicle.

Working ongoing complaints of subjects taking double and triple limits of panfish at Cotton Road, COs Kris Kiel and Todd Szyska worked surveillance of a group of anglers. The COs worked the group and observed multiple subjects taking more than their fair share of panfish. There were so many subjects leaving the ice with heavy buckets the COs could not make contact with all of them. The COs noted that the subjects were hiding behind an old shanty on the ice for cover to count and sort fish so as not to be over their limit. The COs held fast on the location mingling with the anglers and later that afternoon the subjects who had been hiding and counting fish behind the shanty reappeared. The subjects continued to fish in the same spot and caught one fish after the next. The COs finally were able to contact the anglers. All of the anglers were in possession of overlimits on the ice on top of what they had already taken home in the morning (limit of panfish). All subjects were ticketed for taking overlimits of panfish.

COs Kris Kiel and Todd Szyska worked a trespass complaint where the property owners had requested prosecution for recreational trespass to anglers walking from the

ice on Lake St. Clair onto their property to fish in a cove. The COs issued three tickets for recreational trespass during their patrol. The property owners had posted "No Trespassing" signs right at the point where the subjects had entered the property off of the ice. When the subjects were asked if they saw the signs, one of them replied he had been doing it for years.

CO Todd Szyska and Intern Ryan Cook were checking anglers at the Spillway Dam. As the pair walked down to talk to the anglers, one of them whispered to his buddy, "Oh no, here comes the DNR". After checking their tackle and asking for fishing licenses, it became apparent why the comment had occurred. The angler who was nervous could not find his fishing license. A check of the license system revealed the subject had not purchased a license since 2011. Enforcement action was taken.

While watching anglers from shore in northern Macomb County, CO Ben Lasher observed a couple of subjects fishing with too many lines. After a few minutes, the CO walked out and contacted three subjects from Ohio. Two of the subjects had three tip-ups out and were fishing with a fourth pole. Bond and enforcement action was taken.

CO Ken Kovach located a large pile of trash dumped in the Port Huron SGA. The CO was able to dig through the trash and find some personal information. CO Kovach tracked the subject down in Port Huron. The subject admitted to the violation and enforcement action was taken.

CO Ken Kovach received a call that a group of subjects was floating down Mill Creek in St. Clair County stealing tree stands. The complainant saw the subjects as they were attempting to take his stand. He scared them off and reported it. CO Kovach was able to respond downstream and contact the four juveniles as they were pulling their paddle boat out of the water. The subjects did not have life jackets and were not dressed for the weather. Parents were contacted and did not know the juveniles were floating the river. The parents and juveniles were educated on the dangers of the cold water. The parents had the juveniles contact the complainant and everyone agreed as punishment the juveniles would clean up trash along the creek.

While checking several anglers near the Clinton River Spillway Dam, CO Kris Kiel and Intern Ryan Cook contacted a subject with five northern pike on a stringer. The CO asked the subject if he knew what the limit was and the subject told him, "Someone told me six or seven pieces". The subject got an education on the legal limit and a ticket for the overlimit.

While heading home from court, CO Ken Kovach received radio traffic of a suicidal subject who could be in possession of firearms. A short time later, the subject's vehicle was seen at a beach in Marysville. CO Kovach was in the area and met with two local officers. The three devised a plan and located the subject outside of his vehicle. The officers took the subject into custody. While handcuffing and searching the subject, CO Kovach found a small revolver in the subject's front pocket. The officers also searched

the vehicle and located two other pistols and two long guns. Once notified, a family petitioned the subject to get some psychological assistance.

CO Dan Walzak and intern A.J. Benson contacted two anglers at Huroc Park in Flat Rock and asked them how they were doing. The anglers had not caught any fish and when asked for their fishing licenses, one angler stated that he didn't pick up his license because it was a "spur of the moment" decision to go fishing. The other angler stated that he purchased a license but left it in his car, which was a considerable distance away. A computer check on the two subjects revealed that the first subject had not purchased a license and the second subject had purchased a license for the year. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Brandon Kieft followed up on a complaint of ice anglers keeping overlimits of panfish, undersized northern pike and out of season bass on Voorheis Lake in Orion Township. CO Kieft was able to contact two subjects matching the descriptions given by the complainant. One angler was in possession of an undersized northern pike and the other was in possession of an out of season largemouth bass. One of the individuals had an excessive history with the DNR Law Enforcement Division dating back to 1983. Enforcement action was taken on both subjects.

CO Brandon Kieft and Intern Ryan Cook responded to the scene of a vehicle that had veered off the road and rolled over into the Shiawassee River. Both occupants were able to get out of the vehicle with minor injuries; however, the intoxicated driver began to assault local firefighters after the incident. Michigan State Police troopers, CO Kieft, and Intern Cook were able to secure the scene and the subject was arrested. He was lodged in the Oakland County Jail.

CO Ben Shively and Intern Ryan Cook responded to a complaint of two anglers fishing with more lines than allowed on a northern Oakland County Lake. CO Shively was able to set up and watch the two anglers and counted eight tip-ups; and both anglers were using a rod and jigging. Contact was made and tickets were issued for fishing with more than three lines, possession of an overlimit of panfish, and a verbal warning was given for no name and address on tip-ups.

DISTRICT 21

While working with Lapeer County Soil Erosion staff and DEQ, Water Resource Division Staff, Environmental Investigation Section, Detective Angela Brown responded to and investigated a complaint of dredging activity within a regulated lake, pond or stream. The site was on private property located on Barber Road in Metamora Township in Lapeer County. The contractor, a 47 year old Attica man who owns and operates a dredging company, was ticketed under Part 301 of NREPA for dredging in pond without a permit. The pond, approximately 4 acres in size, was found to be contiguous to a stream. This violation fell in the minor offense category and is a misdemeanor with a potential fine of \$500.

Local Health Department Officials contacted the Saginaw Bay District, Environmental Investigations Section (EIS) detective concerning a suspected septage hauler violation. A recently licensed septage hauler was observed to be working in Midland and Clare County, but was not taking septage waste to the designated waste facility. Detective Erick Thorson, with the assistance of EIS Detective Angela Brown, performed surveillance and documented septage services performed by the suspect. Detective Thorson then worked with health department officials and the DEQ to conduct a septage records inspection on the suspected violator. The violator admitted to disposing of the septage waste in an abandoned septic system and was not keeping records of his septage services. Enforcement action was taken and on February 25, 2013 the suspect was fined \$500 in 80th District Court in Harrison. Local health department officials issued a cease and desist order prohibiting the septage hauler from operating until the DEQ re-evaluates his septage hauler permit.